

The U.S. Joins the Fight

- When he called for war against Germany and the Central Powers (4/2/17), Wilson said “The world must be made safe for democracy”

“We are glad...to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German people included; for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life...”

- Wilson claimed U.S. had **no selfish motives** in fighting the war
 - The above quote does later take on special meaning when U.S. is faced with Russia becoming **communist** during WWI
- U.S. had to mobilize the army once war was declared
 - Only had 200K troops in uniform
 - **Selective Service Act** passed, creating a draft for the war
 - 4.2 million men inducted out of pool of 24 million men
 - Underwent total of 9 mos. Training
 - Many **African American** troops – usually segregated
 - Many weapons outdated
 - Airforce still small – 55 planes & 130 pilots
 - Industry had to react quickly to make new weapons
- Major task for U.S. – **transporting** & supplying troops overseas
 - Also supporting the Allies – now suffering from the long war
 - Wilson given broad **emergency** powers by Congress to direct the economy (hold prices in check) and spur the war effort
 - Wilson commanded govt. agencies representing a huge expansion of federal & executive power
 - Govt. agencies included:
 - **War Industries Board** – allocated raw materials, eliminated waste, expanded production
 - **War Labor Board** – mediated labor disputes to head off possible work stoppages
 - **Railroad Administration** – controlled & unified rail operations
 - **Shipping Board** – responsible for transport of troops and materials to Europe
 - **Fuel Administration** – increased production of fossil fuels and fought wastefulness
 - **Food Administration** – increased farm output, encouraged public conservation
 - U.S. used a **propaganda** campaign to “educate the public”
 - **Committee on Public Information**
 - Job was to get people to hate the Germans & encourage the war effort

- Caused cases of **super-Americanism** – focused on immigrants (especially German-Americans)
 - All things German were banned or renamed
 - Ex. Hamburgers became Liberty steaks
 - German workers fired – German books removed from libraries
 - An extreme response to propaganda
 - Suspicion of **espionage** (spying) or **sedition** (inducing rebellion) sometimes led to violations of civil rights
 - **Espionage Act (1917)** punished spying, sabotage, obstructing war effort, and banned anti-war material
 - **Sedition Act (1918)** punished those who spoke or wrote against America or the war effort
 - 1500 pacifists and pro-Germans arrested
 - Leads to a Supreme Court Decision – **Schenck v. United States (1919)** – 1 of many free speech cases
 - In the decision, distribution of anti-war material presents a **clear & present** danger to the U.S.
 - Not protected by 1st Amendment
 - The acts aimed at socialists, anarchists, labor
 - To finance the war, the govt.:
 - Raised income taxes
 - Sold **war bonds**
- **U.S. entry into the war assured the Allies final victory**
 - Fresh troops, weapons, etc. while the enemy had no more
 - U.S. Navy helped shut down the U-boats
 - Use of **convoy system** – merchant ships escorted by military
 - U.S. forces known as the **American Expeditionary Force (AEF)**
 - Led by General **John J. (Blackjack) Pershing**
 - AEF was instrumental in repelling German offensives driving toward Paris (battles of Belleau Wood & Chateau-Thierry)
 - Led Allied counteroffensives at St. Mihiel & the Argonne Forest
 - U.S. lost **48K in battle & 56K to disease**
- **Russians pulled out of the war soon after the 1917 Russian Revolution**
 - Bolsheviks (Communists) signed treaty with Germans 3/3/18
 - No more **Eastern Front** but too late to benefit Germany
- By Sept. 1918, Allied power was too much for Germany
 - Defeat of Central Powers was imminent
 - In Nov. 1918, **Kaiser Wilhelm** abdicated
 - **Nov. 11, 1918** – Germany signed an **armistice** (truce) ending the fighting
 - A peace conference would be held in **Versailles, France** to decide on a treaty to end the war